



P. O. Box 300900 ♦ Montgomery, AL 36130  
(334) 242-3184 ♦ [preserveala.org](http://preserveala.org)

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**Contact:** Lee Anne Wofford, (334) 230-2659

## **Dekalb County's Old Valley Head Cemetery added to Alabama Historic Cemetery Register**

The Alabama Historical Commission recently added Old Valley Head Cemetery in Valley Head to the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register.

"The cemetery register is a prestigious listing of historic cemeteries in Alabama," said Lee Anne Wofford, cemetery program coordinator. "The AHC considers the notable historic cemeteries in this register to be particularly worthy of preservation and appreciation, and therefore deserving of this special recognition."

There are now three cemeteries in Dekalb County on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 320 cemeteries statewide.

Old Valley Head Cemetery is historically associated with the Valley Head Baptist Church, which was constituted in 1845. From 1845 to 1898 the church was known as Mount Zion. In 1920, the local congregation built a new church building in another area of Valley Head. There are ten marked graves and numerous unmarked burials here. The earliest marked grave is dated 1888. It is possible that Dr. James Gardner (1788-1848) and his family members are buried here. Dr. Gardner settled in Valley Head around 1835 and owned substantial property in the township.

The Alabama Historical Commission administers the Alabama Historic Cemetery Program that gives aid to the general public, government officials, civic groups, and others in identifying, documenting, registering, and conserving Alabama's historic cemeteries.

The Alabama Historic Cemetery Register officially recognizes and honors family and community cemeteries that were established at least 40 years ago.

Listing in the state cemetery register is an honorary designation imposing no restrictions on property owners. State law protects all cemeteries from willful desecration and destruction.

*To protect, preserve, and interpret Alabama's historic places is the mission of the **Alabama Historical Commission**, the **State Historic Preservation Office**.*

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